

10/29/77

AL 222D

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☐ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF LANGUAGE SERVICES

(TRANSLATION)

LS NO. 65031 - B

Buenos Aires, October 29, 1977

Open Letter to:

Major General Leopoldo Caltieri
Chief of the Second Corps of the
Argentine Army
Buenos Aires

Sir:

With the greatest respect for your high office, we, the undersigned, Fredelinda Vall Méndez, national I.D. 92,160,873, a Paraguayan citizen, Juan Bernardino Méndez Vall, national I.D. 92,273,059, and José Liberto Méndez Vall, national I.D. 92,237,781, Paraguayan citizens, the wife and sons of Epifanio Méndez Fleitas, a Paraguayan citizen, writer and Colorado political leader opposed to the regime of General Stroessner who was exiled over 20 years ago, appeal to your Military Command regarding the detention of our said head of household and of our son and brother Epifanio Méndez Vall 22 days ago upon orders of Sector 233 of the Argentine Army, a military sector under the jurisdiction of the Second Corps which you head.

Our family is among the hundreds of thousands of Paraguayans who found refuge and warm welcome on Argentine soil. For that reason we are eternally grateful to its people and have deep respect for its institutions and authorities. The head of our family taught us to observe the principle of noninterference in questions exclusively concerning kindred nations because noninterference in the domestic policy matters of another State is a universal principle which implies the obligation of reciprocity. We

therefore abide by the motto "Don't interfere in matters that don't concern you and no one will interfere in yours." Guided by this premise, basing our conduct on Christian doctrine, and with absolute faith in the imminent triumph of democracy in our country, we chose exile more than 20 years ago.

Thousands of pieces of evidence amassed in Epifanio Méndez Fleitas' lifetime dedicated to serving the people of his homeland are available to you, General, and millions of witnesses can substantiate them. We therefore consider the detention of Epifanio Méndez Fleitas and his son unwarranted and can only construe it to be the result of self-serving, mistaken, and libelous charges that most probably come from representatives of the regime which, not content with the impoverishment of our homeland, continues its persecution across the border, abusing the good faith of the authorities and institutions of neighboring countries.

We hereby appeal to your great military authority in this jurisdiction, and hope that your authority will bring about the proper administration of justice. We are convinced that this will come about lest episodes of this type tarnish the good name of Argentine justice. We are enclosing a memorandum, documents, and evidence which will be valuable in learning the true facts about this case. The said information sets forth for the information of your Command and the units under its authority: (1) details on the detention of Epifanio Méndez Fleitas and Epifanio Méndez Vall; (2) steps taken to clarify the motives and situation of both persons; (3) replies to our requests; (4) background and personalities of the prisoners; (5) opinions concerning the case; (6) attachments, documents, evidence.

General, we are confident that this memorandum will be fairly considered by the Argentine authorities, thereby averting an error which, by allowing an injustice, may be remembered by history as an affront to a kindred community. Your Excellency must be aware that concern over this question transcends the family unit and closely concerns the entire Paraguayan community.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration and, certain that you will use your good offices to clarify the reasons which led to the imprisonment of Epifanio Méndez Fleitas and his son, with the urgency which justice requires, we take pleasure in expressing, General, our highest consideration.

[Signature]

-- Fredelinda Vall de Méndez

[Signature]

Juan Bernardino Méndez

[Signature]

José Liberto Méndez